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RAVE News

#### Issue 10.

**May 2020**

[*https://federation.edu.au/schools/school-of-education/research/research-groups/rave-researching-adult-and-vocational-education*](https://federation.edu.au/schools/school-of-education/research/research-groups/rave-researching-adult-and-vocational-education)

**Welcome**

*Professor Erica Smith, RAVE (Researching Adult and Vocational Education) Convenor*

*In this edition of ‘RAVE News’, we report on activities of the research group since May 2019. Further information about all of our activities is available on our web site (see web link above) and our email address is* [*vet.research@federation.edu.au*](https://outlook.uob.ballarat.edu.au/owa/m.wise%40ballarat.edu.au/redir.aspx?C=qicVly1hm0-m_uT_kFi1WswoGNpFk9MILOSWGNsZ9MZT1J4EORn4VPd2hr4q2DxrNIkDDiONXR4.&URL=mailto%3avet.research%40federation.edu.au)*. Do not hesitate to email RAVE for more details about any items*.

We would like to send colleagues both in Australia and overseas our very best wishes at this time of the COVID-19 crisis, and hope that you are all well and safe. We also know that you will be sharing our concerns about how VET systems are coping with the many constraints on, and necessary changes in, their operations. We commend to you, if you have not seen it elsewhere, the OECD’s report released on 6th May‘VET in a time of crisis: Building foundations for resilient vocational education and training systems’. It can be viewed at <https://read.oecd-ilibrary.org/view/?ref=132_132718-fdwmrqsgmy&title=VET-in-a-time-of-crisis-Building-foundations-for-resilient-vocational-education-and-training-systems-%5C>

As with every other organisation, RAVE’s work has been altered and curtailed by the COVID-19 crisis. Some grant application processes have been delayed or cancelled and others are not possible to pursue as industry partners are tied up with dealing with the crisis, and so we are constrained by the lack of funding opportunities. Hence in this edition we want to tell you not only about our funded research projects but also about our current unfunded research.

On the last page of this newsletter you will find a flyer for a monthly webinar series about doing VET research, organised by the Australasian VET Research Association (AVETRA). You can attend just one or the whole series. The series commences on June 12th.

**RAVE Research projects**

**New funded RAVE research projects**

**‘The Australian VET workforce’**

Researcher: Erica Smith received a small grant ($3000) from Korea Research Institute for VET (KRIVET), March 2020.

The project involved researching aspects of the VET teaching workforce in Australia, including the analysis of research data and government policies and reports.  The context is VET for adults and disadvantaged groups, not VET in secondary schools. The project covered the following topics:

* Working conditions of vocational training teachers, such as wages and working hours, compared with other occupations;
* Qualifications and professional development for vocational training teachers;
* Career development, career guidance, and career management for vocational training teachers.

The final report is available on the RAVE web site at <https://federation.edu.au/schools/school-of-education/research/research-groups/rave-researching-adult-and-vocational-education/current-research>

**‘Pedagogies to engage: VET teacher practices and pedagogies that engage early school leavers’**

Researcher: Annette Foley. Small grant, funded by the Australian Council of Deans of Education Vocational Education Group, 2019 (<https://www.acde.edu.au/networks-and-partnerships/acde-vocational-group/>).

The study examined how adult pedagogies and practices were used to engage early school leavers at an early school leaver program at a Regional TAFE Institute. The project was designed to provide an enhanced understanding of young people’s experiences in the early school leaving program and explored the young person’s plans and aspirations after completing their TAFE program. The research questions were:

1. What teaching strategies do VET teachers employ to engage young learners who have left school early?
2. What are the pedagogies used in pathways programs?
3. What other teaching strategies are employed to engage students who have left school early?
4. What are the aspirations and plans of young people?

Rationale: School retention rates for students in regional Victoria are lower than metropolitan areas. Out-of-school programs and TAFE programs that cater for early school leavers play an important role in engaging and reengaging students back into schooling, education and training and employment.

Method: A qualitative single case study was employed in an early school leaving program at a TAFE institute in regional Victoria. Data were collected via semi structured face to face interviews with seven TAFE teachers teaching young people in the early school leavers program, and two focus groups, of 8 and 10 students. Preliminary findings were presented at OctoberVET 2019 - see the RAVE web site under ‘current events’.

**New unfunded research projects**

**Partners and Men’s sheds: The broader benefits**

Research Team: Annette Foley, Barry Golding and Helen Weadon.

The study examines the partners (and carers) of men participating in men’s sheds to better understand what benefits they gained from the men close to them attending a shed. The research was interested in exploring the benefits, including health benefits, for partners in relation to the men’s attendance at the shed, how the sheds were perceived by the partners, and had the relationship changed since the men started to attend the shed. The research questions were:

1. What are the benefits for the partners of men when the men attend men’s sheds?
2. Had the relationship changed since your partner went to the shed?
3. Are there health benefits for partners, and for the men?
4. What are the social benefits for the partners, and for the men?
5. What do the sheds mean for the partners in relation to opportunities to learn and socialise?
6. What impacts are there on partners now that men have a social network away from the partner?

Significance: The project is significant because it has been shown, through earlier RAVE research that men benefit from attending sheds, through greater community connection, social interactions, sharing skills and through benefits to health and general wellbeing. But there is little research about the impacts on partners or carers.

Method: Data were collected via 17 semi structured face-to-face interviews with partners or carers of men who were attending sheds in Ballarat and surrounding areas. In addition, several focus groups of men in six sheds in the Ballarat and surrounding areas were conducted.

**Research for Adult Learning Australia to celebrate its 60th anniversary**

**Barry Golding** completed a suite of research products commissioned by ALA (Adult Learning Australia) to coincide with a celebration (during 2020) of its 60 years as a national association. It is based around a critical analysis of over one thousand articles in the association’s journals over the six decades. This work follows on from similar research conducted with Jack Harvey during 2018 for AONTAS, the Irish adult education peak body for its 50-year celebrations. That research was published in 2019 in a peer reviewed article in *The Adult Learner* (see below). The current research will result in a peer reviewed article for publication during 2020 in the *Australian Journal of Adult Learning* called ‘Getting serious: The national ‘vision splendid’ for adult education 60 years on’. The article poses three research questions, based on evidence from six decades of the *Australian Journal of Adult Education* (*AJAL*, 2000-present) and its antecedent journals dating back to 1961.

Barry has also produced a set of 36 800-word ‘cameos’ based on the recollections and opinions of past and present prominent Australian and international adult educators. These will be used by Adult Learning Australia (ALA) during the 2020 celebrations to critically reflect on the current situation for Australian adult education, and possible new directions for ALA and the *AJAL.*

**Other unfunded work in progress**

**Annette Foley** has been carrying out unfunded research on a project ‘Local Communities: Global Challenges’ with Sue Emmett, Adele Echter and Anitra Goriss Hunter from the School of Education. Interviews were carried out in the second half of 2019 in eight community organisations in the Melbourne, Werribee and Ballarat areas.

**Erica Smith** has been carrying out unfunded research to follow up the ILO apprenticeship intermediaries project featured in RAVE News 2019. This new phase comprised interviews with intermediary organisations in England and Australia. The project looks at the nature and functions of apprenticeship intermediary organisations, such as Group Training Organisations, in the two countries. The English stage was carried out in July 2019. The Australian research, planned for early 2020, is delayed due to the COVID-19 crisis.

**Barry Golding** continues to research and draft material for a book planned with local award winning writer and publisher, Gib Wettenhall, examining the first five years of contact in southern Dja Dja Wurrung country, between Major Mitchell’s 1836 expedition and the creation of the Loddon Aboriginal Protectorate in 1840-1. The book will be based on a fine grained account of what happened and what changed for people and the environment in a number of significant sites in the landscape, and the legacy that remains from this little-known but sometimes violent era of the early contact period.

**Updates on previous projects**

**Young futures: Education, training and employment decision-making in non-metropolitan areas** *(Erica Smith, Annette Foley, Helen Weadon & Tim Harrison)*

This was a major project funded bythe Department of Education and Training (DET) Victoria as a Strategic Research Seed Funding Pilot 2018-19. It looked at how young people imagined and navigated pathways related to post-school education, training and employment. The research fieldwork, involving 212 participants including 112 young people at three rural and three pre-urban sites, concluded in mid-2019. Data analysis took place in the second half of 2019 and the report as written; and a presentation was made to staff of the Department in early 2020. Feedback visits to the six sites began in late 2019 but were interrupted by the COVID-19 crisis. Ten Key Findings can be seen in the project’s Executive Summary which is available on the project web site at <https://federation.edu.au/schools/school-of-education/research/research-groups/rave-researching-adult-and-vocational-education/current-research>

The full report concluded with a series of recommendations, derived from the key findings and the participant suggestions, for the following stakeholder groups: schools, community organisations including employers, tertiary education providers, young people and their families, and governments. We are continuing to analyse the data for publication.

**Learning to be greener** (*Erica Smith, Annette Foley and Morgan Wise*)

This was an unfunded RAVE project on how people learned about plastic bag use and recycling changes. The title was derived from earlier RAVE research ‘Learning to be drier’. The project concluded in mid-2019. Preliminary findings were presented at a conference in Nottingham, England and attracted a lot of interest. The paper, ‘Environmental sustainability practices: How adults learn’ is listed later on under ‘conference papers-other’. The results at that point showed that people learned from a range of sources, but some were much more common than others. Among media sources, two-thirds of the survey respondents learned from television, and around 40% from social media and the internet more generally; and among other sources, friends and family were information sources for two-thirds of people, while community information and public notices in shops or on litter bins were used by around half of the respondents. Some respondents were passionately engaged with the topic. We are currently analysing the remainder of the data.

**OctoberVET 2019**

RAVE hosted its twelfth annual OctoberVET event in Ballarat, on November 14th 2019 at the SMB Campus (Tech Park), Ballarat. The event was opened by Professor Claire McLachlan, Dean of the School of Education. The theme of the event was ‘*Supporting young people into their futures:  Research and practice.’*   The research-based event is part of the series of annual national ‘OctoberVET’ events around Australia, an activity of the Australian Vocational Education and Training Research Association (AVETRA).

The event included presentations by FedUni researchers and external experts, around the theme of young people, their futures, and careers. This is a very topical issue at the moment, exemplified by the formation of the National Careers Institute. The presentations included two keynote speeches: one on the ‘Young futures’ project by Erica Smith and Annette Foley, and one on career practitioners from Bernadette Gigliotti from the Career Education Association of Victoria. Other presentations were provided by Gosia Klatt from Melbourne University, Gary Workman from the Apprenticeship Employment Network Victoria, and Barry Wright from Federation TAFE. Participants were offered the chance to discuss, in groups, the policy and practice implications arising from the presentations of the day, with the afternoon concluding with a Q&A session with a panel of experts from the speakers.

The event attracted 40 professionals including RTO, GTO and TAFE representatives, Federation University staff, and secondary school staff. The day provided those who attended with an opportunity to increase their awareness of the issues faced by young peoples’ future employment and education options, the impact career practitioners are having in supporting career development, and current apprenticeship issues. Evaluations collected via Survey Monkey showed a high level of satisfaction with the event.

****Presentations from the event may be seen on the RAVE web site at <https://federation.edu.au/schools/school-of-education/research/research-groups/rave-researching-adult-and-vocational-education/vet-events>

**VET teacher education news from Federation University**

**Undergraduate Certificate in VET**

Following the release of the Higher Education Relief Package in response to the COVID 19 pandemic, the Commonwealth government has introduced an Undergraduate Certificate qualification designed to assist in reskilling the workforce. This is now a full qualification type on the Australian Qualifications Framework.

Amongst its Undergraduate Certificates, Federation University has developed an Undergraduate Certificate in Vocational Education and Training (VET).This provides an introductory sequence to the university’s Associate Degree of VET, and is offered by the School of Education.

The qualification could be of particular interest to people working in industry, or displaced from industry, who would like to move into teaching in VET, or wish to work as trainers in industry. It could also be of interest to people working casually as VET teachers looking to move into full-time work; or simply for VET teachers wishing to make a head start on the Associate Degree, at a discounted price.

The Undergraduate Certificate in VET consists of four 15 credit-point courses that make up part of the Associate Degree of Vocational Education and Training. The program is on-line, with printed learning materials, and people have to enrol in four courses in one semester. For people enrolling for semester 2, 2020, the government offers a special HECS price of only $1250 for the four courses, as opposed to the normal HECS amount of $840 per course.

Students who complete the Undergraduate Certificate are eligible to apply for full credit towards the completion of the Associate Degree of Vocational Education and Training <https://study.federation.edu.au/#/course/DTV3> Additional entry requirements may apply for that qualification, depending on participants’ prior qualifications and experience. The Associate Degree allows access to the TAFE pay scale associated with an AQF level 6 qualification.

For more details about the Undergraduate Certificate, see <https://study.federation.edu.au/#/course/DXC10> or contact Erica Smith on 03-5327 9665 or e.smith@federation.edu.au

**Applied research single-subject course**

It’s always been important to have sound research to underpin both policy development and VET practice and it’s becoming an increasing trend for VET teachers to undertake research. That’s why in 2018 the Victorian TAFE Teaching Agreement was updated with pay scales which encouraged teachers to undertake a VET teaching qualification which included applied research, along with other provisions. As part of its Associate Degree of VET, Federation University redeveloped an existing course to meet the applied research provisions. This is part of our Associate Degree and is also offered as a standalone single-subject course, which is proving popular with TAFE teachers who are lacking this component in their existing qualifications – or who are simply undertaking it out of interest! Our first intake was in July 2019 and teachers completed a range of interesting research mini-projects relating to the VET sector and also to industry. Research into on-line learning was a common topic, even before the current crisis. We have cohorts of students from specific TAFE Institutes enrolled in this research course, currently and planned for next semester, and we look forward to many more interesting pieces of research. Enquiries can be directed to Erica Smith on e.smith@federation.edu.au

**RAVE achievements**

**RAVE authors win the 2019 AVETRA journal paper of the year**

Three researchers from RAVE have won the Journal Article of the Year award (2019) of the Australian Vocational Education and Training Research Association (AVETRA). The award was presented virtually at AVETRA’s 2020 AGM on April 23rd and is featured at <http://www.avetra.org.au/pages/journal-article-of-the-year-award.html> The three RAVE researchers are Erica Smith, Jackie Tuck, and Andy Smith; the fourth author was Victor Callan from the University of Queensland. The article is:

Smith, E., Callan, V., Tuck, J. & Smith, A. (2019). Employer training in Australia: Current practices and concerns. *International Journal of Training and Development,* 23(2), 169-183. [http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/ijtd.12152](https://protect-au.mimecast.com/s/gaSmC4QOmBCzlqxqUOAXOz?domain=dx.doi.org)

The International Journal of Training and Development is a ‘Quartile 1’ journal. The journal commissioned a video-clip for the article, which can be seen at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4vm2HF4Ybhs&feature=youtu.be>

The research reported in the paper was funded by the National Centre for Vocational Education Research, and the full report can be seen at <https://www.ncver.edu.au/research-and-statistics/publications/all-publications/continuity-and-change-employers-training-practices-and-partnerships-with-training-providers>

**Australian Research Council research assessment exercise successes for RAVE**

In the outcomes announced in 2019, Federation University scored a creditable ‘Medium’ Impact in the Education field in the Australian Research Council (ARC) ‘**Engagement and Impact’** Outcomes section, focused on the evidence of impact of Barry Golding’s national and international research into men’s sheds (with other Federation University academics, including Associate Professor Annette Foley and Dr Jack Harvey), see <https://dataportal.arc.gov.au/EI/Web/Outcomes#/institution/FED>).

The evidence included a video featuring Barry made by the university in late 2018 with the cooperation of both Buninyong and Ballarat East Men’s Sheds. There is a copy of the video posted on the Federation University Research site, accessible via <https://federation.edu.au/research/our-research/research-stories/mens-sheds>. The site notes that ‘The Men’s Shed movement, which began in Australia but is now international, has helped older men re-engage with learning and had a major impact on the health challenges they face due to ageing, social isolation or losing their jobs, especially in rural and remote regions’.

In addition, RAVE members’ grants and publications made a major contribution to the 2019 resultsfor **Excellence in Research Australia** . Federation University gained a 3 (World Standard) rating in the FOR Code 1301 Education Systems. This is the first ‘World standard’ result for Education at Federation/Ballarat University since the ERA began. See <https://dataportal.arc.gov.au/ERA/Web/Outcomes#/institution/FED>

**RAVE members’ publications and achievements since RAVE News 9 (May, 2019)**

**Reports**

**Smith, E.** (2020). *The VET teaching workforce in Australia*,Research report for the Korea Research Institute for VET (KRIVET).

**Smith, E. & Foley, A**. (2019). *Young futures: Education, training and employment decision-making in non-metropolitan areas.* Report submitted to the Victorian Department of Education and Training, Victoria. September. The report is not available to the public, but the Executive Summary is available on the RAVE web site.

**Smith, E.** (2019). *Intermediary organizations in apprenticeship systems. Geneva: International Labour Organization*. <https://www.ilo.org/skills/pubs/WCMS_725504/lang--en/index.htm> ISBN: 978-92-2-133941-0

**Chapters in edited books**

Paynter M., Halabi A., **Tuck J.** (2019). Storytelling and Corporate Social Responsibility Reporting: A Review of BHP 1992–2017. In: Crowther D., Seifi S. (eds) *The Components of Sustainable Development. Approaches to Global Sustainability, Markets, and Governance*. Springer, Singapore. <https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-981-13-9209-2_14>

**Smith, E. (2019).** How do vocational teachers keep up to date with trends in pedagogy and in industry? In M. Pilz (Ed), (*Berufsbildung zwischen Tradition und Moderne (Vocational education and training: between tradition and modernity, Festschrift for Thomas Deissinger’s 60th birthday.* Wiesbaden, Germany*:* Springer, pp 365-380.

**Smith, E. (2019).** The importance of VET teacher professionalism: An Australian case study. In Simon McGrath, Martin Mulder, J. Papier and R. Suart “Handbook of Vocational Education and Training: Developments in the Changing World of Work”. Switzerland: Springer. Volume 2, Part XI, Chapter 88, pp 1627-1648  [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-94532-3\_23](https://protect-au.mimecast.com/s/4ZGRCOMKlwuNy2ZyuETybj?domain=doi.org)

**Peer-reviewed journal papers**

Barratt-Pugh, L., Hodge, S., & **Smith, E.** (2020)*.* Learning & development practitioners: identity, profession and future trajectory. *Asia Pacific Journal of Human Resources, 58*(2), 220-246.

**Smith, E.,** Callan, V., **Tuck, J. & Smith, A.** (2019). Employer training in Australia: Current practices and concerns. *International Journal of Training and Development,* 23(2), 169-183. [http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/ijtd.12152](https://protect-au.mimecast.com/s/gaSmC4QOmBCzlqxqUOAXOz?domain=dx.doi.org)

**Golding, B.** & Harvey, J. (2019) ’50 Years of AONTAS: Developments in the field of adult education in Ireland as reflected in the contents of The Adult Learner and its antecedent journals’, The *Adult Learner, 2019,*pp.21-56

**Non-peer reviewed papers**

**Smith, E. & Foley, A**. (2020). Young futures: Education, training and employment decision-making in non-metropolitan areas. *Research Today, 25*, 5-7.

**Conference papers - peer-reviewed**

**Smith, E.** (2019). Making a difference or making a dollar? Intermediary organisations in apprenticeships. *'No future for old VET': Researching for the training systems of tomorrow’: 22nd Annual conference of AVETRA,* Western Sydney University, Parramatta, June 17-18. <http://www.avetra.org.au/pages/publications-conference-archives-46.html>

**Smith E.** (2019). Competency-based training Australian style: How it exposes VET to risk. *'No future for old VET': Researching for the training systems of tomorrow’: 22nd Annual conference of AVETRA,* Western Sydney University, Parramatta, June 17-18.<http://www.avetra.org.au/pages/publications-conference-archives-46.html>

**Conference papers – other**

**Plenary presentations:**

**Shreeve, R.** (2020). **‘**Contracted "fee for service" training in public providers - twenty years of endeavour’, *VET Policy and Compliance Summit* on 11 March 2020 in Rydges Hotel Sydney, 11 March.

**Smith, E.** (2019) New apprenticeship arrangements for a new world of work. Invited plenary presentationto *CEDEFOP and OECD Symposium: The next steps for apprenticeship*. OECD offices, Paris, 7 October. <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/events-and-projects/events/2019-joint-cedefop-and-oecd-symposium-next-steps-apprenticeship-0>

**Smith, E.** (2019). ‘VET educators: A constant for quality in an inconstant system’, in‘*Celebrating 25 Years – Reflect, Adapt, Evolve’, Quality in Education and Training (QuIET) Network* conference July 11th-12th 2019, FedUni TAFE, Ballarat. Invited keynote speaker.

**Other:**

**Smith, E. & Smith, A.** (2019). ‘Anti-intellectualism’ in the VET sector in Australia: Manifestations and explanations. ***Researching Vocational Education and Training: Journal of Vocational Education and Training 13th International Conference.* Keble College, Oxford, 28-30 June.**

**Smith, E. & Tuck, J.** (2019). The expansion of apprenticeship systems in the G20 countries: What is happening and will it be successful? ***Researching Vocational Education and Training: Journal of Vocational Education & Training 13th International Conf.* Keble College, Oxford, 28-30 June.**

**Smith. E**. (2019). Environmental sustainability practices: How adults learn. In J. Holford (Ed.), *Proceedings of the SCUTREA (Standing Conference on University Teaching and Research in the Education of Adults) Adult Education 100: Reflections & Reconstructions* (pp. 97-106), University of Nottingham, U.K.

**Smith. E. & Foley, A**. (2019). Young people’s decision-making as they leave school in non-metropolitan areas in Australia: Insights from those working with young people. In J. Holford (Ed.), *Proceedings of the SCUTREA (Standing Conference on University Teaching and Research in the Education of Adults) Adult Education 100: Reflections & Reconstructions* (pp. 107-14), University of Nottingham, U.K.

**Smith, E.** (2019). What does Aristotle have to say about Australian VET teachers? *Diverse Pedagogies for Diverse VET Contexts: 5th Annual ACDEVEG Conference on VET Teaching and VET Teacher Education,* Wagga Wagga, 9-10 December.

**Smith, E. & Foley, A**. (2019). How young people in non-metropolitan areas in Victoria imagine their futures. *Supporting young people into their futures: Research and practice,* *OctoberVET Ballarat*, SMB Campus, Federation University, Ballarat, 14 November.

**Smith, E. & Foley, A. & Wise, M.** (2019). Learning about environmental sustainability practices. *Supporting young people into their futures: Research and practice,* *OctoberVET Ballarat*, SMB Campus, Federation University, Ballarat, 14 November.

**Foley, A.** (2019). Adult pedagogies: Engaging early school leavers at TAFE. *Supporting young people into their futures: Research and practice,* *OctoberVET Ballarat*, SMB Campus, Federation University, Ballarat, 14 November.

**Robin Shreeve (2020)** was an invited speaker on a‘Vocational Voices Podcast’ for NCVER with Simon Walker (NCVER) and Craig Robertson (TAFE Directors Australia): The future role of public providers. Thirty years ago, the Australian VET system was on tenterhooks as two major reports were released into the management and costs of training for enterprises against a backdrop of award restructuring that was being championed at the time by the government. How do the projections and goals in these reports compare to the reality facing TAFE today? How has TAFE embraced fee-for-service and are there myths and assumptions surrounding the size of the fee-for-service market and its efficacy or otherwise? The podcast can be heard at <https://www.ncver.edu.au/news-and-events/podcasts/vocational-voices-podcast#s4ep3> and the transcript is available at <https://www.ncver.edu.au/news-and-events/podcasts/vocational-voices-podcast/transcripts/transcript-of-the-role-of-public-providers>

**Erica Smith** Invited to record a podcast on apprenticeships for the Future Skills Centre and the Conference Board, Canada, December 2019.

**Other activities and awards**

**Annette Foley** managed the peer-reviewing of abstracts and full written papers for the Australian VET Research Association conference June 2019. (see <http://www.avetra.org.au/pages/conference-archives-2019.html>)

**Annette Foley** has been elected as the Chair of Adult Learning Australia, 2020.

**Erica Smith** continues to serve as Co-Chair of the INAP international network of apprenticeship researchers, managed from Germany.

**Annette Foley**, along with Rob Townsend, have been appointed as joint guest editors for the 60th Anniversary special edition of the Australian Journal of Adult Learning.

**Erica Smith** has recently completed a term of several years as Associate Editor of the Quartile 1 journal *Education + Training.*

**Annette Foley, Barry Golding** and Helen Weadon have been invited by Professor Liz Atkins and Ass Professor Bill Esmond, from the Centre for Educational Research and Innovation at Derby University in the UK (22nd June 2020) to present a virtual seminar on their current work on ‘Men’s Sheds: The wider benefits’.

**Erica Smith** was invited to be international advisor for a Swedish Research Council Health, Working Life and Welfare (FORTE) grant. A three-year project about VET teacher shortage in Sweden. Project leaders Per Kristmansson and Magnus Fjellström, Umea University, Sweden.

**Carolyn Johnstone** was an invited participant to a DFAT (Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade) ‘Education for Development Forum’ in Canberra (4-5 November, 2019).

**Erica Smith** was invited to an invitation only forum discussing VET’s response to Industry 4.0 and the digital economy. NCVER, Melbourne, Nov 20th 2019.

**Erica Smith** was invited to ‘co-design workshops’ for the National Skills Commission, Skills Organisations and National Careers Institute, by the Australian Government (Dept of Employment, Skills and Small Business) Canberra Oct 31st-Nov 1st 2019.

**Erica Smith** was invited to provide expert advice for NCVER research on ‘Initial vs Continuing VET’, 2019, to provide input into NCVER’s national VET research priorities framework, 2019, and to provide advice on an NCVER project on ‘Improving the quality of VET teaching’, 2020. She was also interviewed by two major consulting firms, each carrying out work for the Commonwealth government on two separate VET issues in November 2019. In 2020 she was Interviewed by staff from the review secretariat, for the ‘Macklin review’: A review into Victoria’s post-secondary education and training system.

**Erica Smith** was asked to assist Department of Employment, Skills, Small and Family Business with advice about the development of the Provider Tool (VET and HE) for the JEDI (Jobs and Education Data Infrastructure) project, 2019

**Morgan Wise** won the Elizabeth Thomas prize, for excellence in VET (Diploma of Project Management). Federation University (2019).

**Community engagement**

**Erica Smith** continues to serve on the Education Industry Reference Committee, which develops and maintains the Training and Education and Foundation Skills Training Packages.

**Barry Golding** as a Patron of the Australian Men’s Shed Association (AMSA) is collaborating with fellow AMSA Patron, Professor John Macdonald of UWS  and David Helmers, CEO of AMSA to produce a strategic policy document which charts the way and options beyond COVID19 for the currently closed networks of thousands of Men’s Sheds in Australia and globally. Elevated higher levels of relatively younger men beyond paid work are anticipated beyond the current pandemic crisis in the medium and longer term in Australia, as well as in newer ‘shedding’ nations more heavily impacted by disease and death including the UK and the US.

**Barry Golding’s** regional community work in the past three years has been focused on developing and implementing the Hepburn Shire Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) through his membership of the Community Reference Group. Barry led in the planning and implementation of the highly successful ‘Ellen’s Walk for Reconciliation’ in 2018 as well as the ‘Grounded in Truth: Reading the Country at Contact Tour’ in 2019. The 2019 tour, developed in consultation with the Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation and Elder, Uncle Ricky Nelson, has been shortlisted as a finalist in the 2020 Local Government LGPro Awards for Excellence. Indigenous Community Partnership Initiative’ category. In 2020, follow up interpretive events are planned for both Reconciliation and NAIDOC Week.

**News from AVETRA (the Australasian VET Research Association)**

**RAVE adjunct member Robin Shreeve** is an adjunct professor at Federation University. Robin was AVETRA’s president from April 2018-April 2020, during which time Erica Smith served as Secretary. Federation University’s RAVE group has therefore made substantial contributions to the revival of AVETRA during these two years.

In the picture below, Robin welcome delegates to AVETRA’s National Conference *(No future for old VET)* June, 2019, in Sydney.

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Erica Smith was also conference organiser for AVETRA’s 2020 conference, supported by administrative assistance kindly provided by the University. The conference was to have been held in Melbourne on April 23rd-24th and unfortunately had to be postponed. The conference had an outstanding list of overseas and Australian keynote speakers, panel members, 60 parallel papers, many from overseas, and high-profile sponsors. The AVETRA Executive Committee will make a decision in early August about whether the conference can be held later this year or whether it will need to be postponed until next April. An announcement will be made on August 10th. The details of the conference can be seen at <https://www.avetra.org.au/pages/avetra-annual-conference.html> The new date will be posted at this location.

AVETRA’s forthcoming webinar series is listed on the following page.



**Australasian Vocational Education and Training Research Association (AVETRA)**

**EARLY CAREER & EMERGING VET RESEARCHER**

**Webinar Series**

As Australia’s peak national VET research association, AVETRA plays an important role in connecting early career and emerging VET researchers with peers and mentors. In 2020, we are excited to announce a new webinar series, aimed at connecting our membership from across Australia and providing an opportunity for engaging with key VET issues and researcher capability development.

**2020 Researcher Development Series**

This webinar series focuses on building researcher capacity and offers an opportunity for early career, emerging and practitioner researchers to strengthen their understanding of the research process. For participants with a research idea in mind, the series offers an opportunity to grow a small-scale research project from conception through to dissemination, through each stage of the research cycle. Each session will be facilitated by a team of experienced VET researchers and includes input from AVETRA’s expert researcher network.

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| **Webinar** | **Topic** | **Date** |
| Webinar 1 | **The role of research for VET practice and policy** | 1pm-2pm FridayJune 12th 2020 |
| Webinar 2 | **Getting started with your VET research idea** | 1pm-2pm FridayJuly 10th 2020 |
| Webinar 3 | **Designing a question for your VET research** | 1pm-2pm FridayAugust 14th 2020 |
| Webinar 4 | **Thinking about your research contexts** | 1pm-2pm FridaySeptember 18th 2020 |
| Webinar 5 | **Collecting and analysing empirical data for your VET research** | 1pm-2pm FridayOctober 16th 2020 |
| Webinar 6 | **Accessing and using secondary and public data** | 1pm-2pm FridayNovember 13th 2020 |
| Webinar 7 | **Understanding the ethics of doing research with humans** | 1pm-2pm FridayFebruary 12th 2021 |
| Webinar 8 | **Sharing your VET research: writing for different audiences** | 1pm-2pm FridayMarch 12th 2021 |

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| **Category** | **Cost** | **What you get** |
| AVETRA Members | Free | Access to participate in all webinars and access to webinar recordings in the members only section of AVETRA website. |
| Non-members: Single webinar | $20 | Access to participate in the webinar and access to webinar recordings, and PDF copies of any slides or resources used during the webinar. |
| Non-members: Researcher development pack | $100 | Access to all 8 webinars and access to webinar recordings, and PDF copies of any slides or resources used during the webinars. |

Please register for the first webinar, ‘The role of research for VET practice and policy’ <https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZUqfuygrjwqH9x2Nw-VrCRKcfLMfB3135cJ>

Further details of the webinar series and other upcoming events can be viewed at the AVETRA webpage at <https://avetra.org.au/pages/upcoming-events.html>